

"Drifting Down the Chipola"

OR,

"Memories Sweet and Sad"

By J. D. Smith, Marianna, Florida

Memory's streamlet of the scene,
Which sweeps the hills of life be-
tween;

And when our walking hour is past,
Upon its shores we rest at last;
And love to view the waters fair
And see lost joys depicted there.

Christmas is always associated in our minds with merry-making, doing for others, giving, and acts of unselfishness; it is a time when all men should be generous; it is a time of rest, too, and our minds naturally revert to things of the past and we think of pleasant incidents in our lives, pleasant places and precious faces. Yet, with some of us who are older, sometimes, like an electric flash, a sting of pain penetrates the heart, if one should be missing from our family circle.

The beautiful Chipola river, for miles north and south along its path, has furnished me some of the most pleasant days I have spent. The stream runs by Marianna and divides Jackson county almost equally. On many of my pleasure trips she has borne me safely on her crystal bosom, furnishing thousands of fish from her rocky pockets, as well as loads of game from her dense swamp.

I love the dear old river, although it came near being my grave. "It was only last year, during the Christmas holidays, that with a gay party of young people in my launch, speeding down the current of Chipola's highest swell, the river being unusually high from recent rains, that, by some sudden rock of the boat, I was thrown overboard, as I was at the time on the bow, having gone there for some article. The water was cold and deep, and as I was clad in a heavy winter suit and shoes, to swim seemed utterly impossible. My friends on board the boat were powerless to help me, as the rope which pulled out the bow by my falling fouled the propeller, and they were at the mercy of the stream for some time. So with me it was swim or drown. When, in my desperation, I looked the water in the face, the dear old stream seemed to say she could not take the life of such a friend, and I almost imagined I could feel a friendly lift. With all my strength I tried to swim some distance across the current toward a clump of bushes whose heads protruded above the water. It was a struggle for life, and I finally succeeded in reaching (though out of breath) and clinging to them until rescued by the boat.

The waters of this river are not treacherous; they are very clear, and it is a very rare thing that any one is drowned in them.

A Trip Down the Chipola.

Several years ago, as I was making preparations for a week's trip with a small party down the river, a beautiful, bright little girl of eleven years begged to let her be one of the party. Though young, she had inherited a love for all the attractions of nature, the woods, the stream, the ocean, and she was a successful fisher-maiden indeed. So, with mother and child, and a party of congenial friends, we started out in our fleet of flat bottom boats, well laden with nice things to eat, and all that was necessary to make the trip pleasant, our destination in view being the fishing grounds of Calhoun county, many miles south.

In the stern of each boat was stationed an old reliable engine of Africa's make. They were always ready to go, and are very useful on such trips in many other ways than managing the boats.

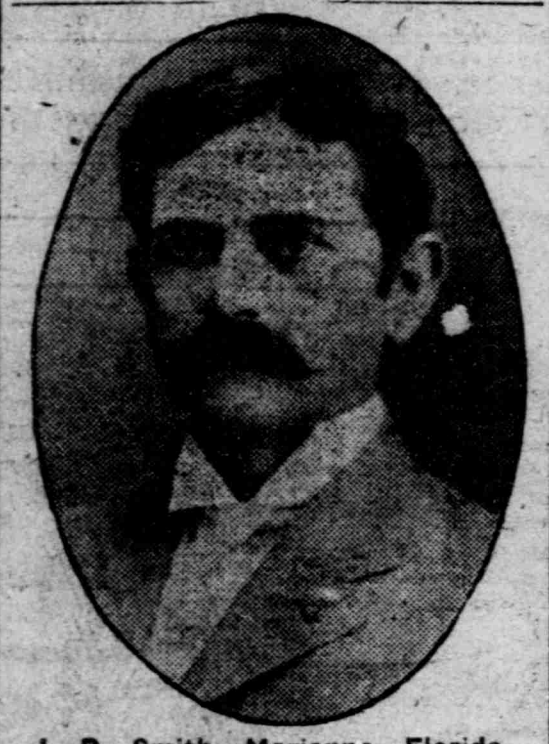
One can scarcely picture in imagination the beautiful scenery along this stream; and it is indeed a treat to be permitted to glide along the gentle current, under arches of green, and enjoy the beautiful picture, ever changing with each curve of its course. Great walls of rock, almost perpendicular in places, fringed and matted with long fronds of lovely ferns of all descriptions, a quantity of it being the graceful "Maiden Hair," as well as other kinds, interspersed with wild violets and other flowers, delight the beholder. In other parts of its course there are large palmetto trees, giving it indeed a picturesque appearance.

Barbing for Trout.

Not caring to waste time upon our home territory we ordered our "engines" to put on all possible speed for several miles; this was a very enjoyable feature of the trip and it was not long before we began to enter trout

fishing grounds. Then every fisherman commenced barbing for trout. This is done by means of a line about three feet in length, to which is attached an artificial minnow, tied to the end of a long pole played ahead of the boats.

Passing over "Little Dook," "Flat," "Federal," "Cow Pen," "Gin House," "Tater Hill" and other shoals, many fine trout were caught, and little time lost. There are more trout on these rough waters than in any other place on the river. The wells of our boats were soon filled with fish. The ladies caught fine trout to their en-



J. D. Smith, Marianna, Florida.

tire satisfaction, and so did the little fisher-maiden, for she was a "natural born" fisher-maiden, and the party was kept constantly laughing at the child's screams of delight at every big strike at her bait, frequently calling on me to help land her heavy catches. It was lots of fun and sport, as fish never hit better. This is the noted fly fishing portion of the stream, and many trout and rock-fish hide among the rocky holes and crevices in the whirled so numerous in shoaly swift water.

As old "Sol" was going over the western bluffs to take his usual nap, and fair Luna was peeping through eastern timber to relieve him of his watch, our little fleet arrived at Chipola's chief attraction, "Big Look and Tremble Falls." The gulchlike falls, can be heard at a long distance. Our African "engines" had given our ladies such exaggerated accounts of the approach to these falls being so dangerous that this noise caused a feeling of alarm, which was expressed in the faces of all who had not visited the place before.

Jumping the Falls. As soon as we turned a bend in the river and came in sight of the falls, the ladies in their uneasiness wanted to land at once, fearing our "engines" would lose control of the boats, and we would be dashed to a watery grave among the rocks below. Of course, I had no idea of trying to run this mighty current with ladies or loads on board, and as soon as we reached a point where we could make a suitable landing, just at the head of the falls, and where the bluff had a sufficient slant for the ladies to climb, we unloaded our cargo and when they had safely landed on the rocks they exclaimed all the adjectives at their command in their exclamations of delight at the picture which was presented to their view. The rays of the setting sun falling on the rising mist from "Big Look" forming all the rainbow hues, and the river, bordered on each side for a mile below, with large live-oaks, formed indeed a picture which would cause any lover of nature a thrill of delight. The roaring waters were covered with foam, and amidst this there was an occasional strike of a fish or jump of a mullet, which entertained the crowd while I got the Chipola fleet in order to jump the falls.

Exchanging places with Richard, my African engine, I took the lead with my boat, I preferred handling the boat in shooting the falls, bidding the others to follow in my path, after relieving the boats of everything possible.

There is no danger in crossing these

falls, provided you keep in the trough of the falls, and speed through the exact channel near the "white side." So, all "elbow grease" was turned on, and our boat led, flying down the dashing current, with Richard and me pulling her with all speed possible, and that, added to the mad rush of the stream at the rate of fifteen or twenty miles an hour, carried us down the trough, bursting through rough, whitecapped waves which swept over the boat, partly filling it with water, and we shot out below like an arrow.

Shooting the Shoots. This is "shooting the shoots" in reality; nothing artificial about it, which it all the more exciting. All the fleet came through and rounded up with us on the white side landing below. The river below the falls is very deep. It was here that Judge Carter and a party were capsized several years ago, and came near being drowned. I don't think any of them could ever explain how they got out, and from all accounts it was a close call.

Old Windsor, our cook, with the commissary wagon and our camping outfit, had reached the spot ahead of us. Tents were up, fires built, and soon the air was filled with the appetizing odor of frying fish. It was not long before a hungry, tired party was seated around the rustic table, laden with fish, squirrel and many dainty things. The contented crowd felt as though they owned the world; that all was well, with no cares in sight, and plenty to eat.

All were merry that night, as the men smoked their pipes, while the ladies related their experiences around the fire, and the colored men, with old pipes of strong odor, around the cook's fire, bragging over their "bosses" and laughing away the time until, overcome with drowsiness, they fell asleep. The old cook came up, stating that he had forgotten to tell us that when he landed on the spot that evening with his wagon, he flushed three wild turkeys out of the pines over our heads, a fine gobbler and two hens, giving the direction in which they flew. The cook made great boasts to the ladies about how he could cook a turkey, promising, if we killed one in the morning, he would prove his skill as a steward. It was agreed that Fred and I would attend to the killing early, while the ladies should rest until breakfast.

Bagged the Gobbler. Next morning as the day star notified us that eastern light was coming, Fred and I were tramping the palm to Hais towards the east, for our turkey. After separating, I killed the gobbler. To the astonishment of all, we returned at sunrise into our camp, with our fine turkey. After a good breakfast the party rounded up our fleet on the "Indian side" below the falls, where the waters were eddy. Here shell-crackers, bream and many other fish were caught in the old southern style, with keen straight poles, and fine silk lines. It was like fishing the sea several poles bending and trembling at the same time under the strain of fine fish. The little fisher-maiden did not fail to catch her share; she furnished amusement to the crowd, for she never failed to speak the joy of her heart, and all the way down stream the child would constantly point out a beautiful picture in nature. It was pleasure to me, as well as to others, to see the bright child so enraptured by the loveliness around her. All the river below the falls furnished pleasant and profitable fishing grounds.

Our camp the next night was on the bluff of a beautiful small stream where it emptied into the Chipola. This was permanent camp, and the next day for dinner a large well-baked turkey adorned our table. Of course, every one will admit that the flavor of wild turkey is far superior to that of the tame. Windsor, the cook, was quite elated on account of the many compliments paid him by the party, who enjoyed the change of diet, as fish were forgotten for the present.

The camp was in an ideal spot under a large cedar, whose bending branches furnished splendid shade for all. For miles in each direction the fishing was all we could desire, quite different from open waters because the tall trees on each bank furnished shade all the day for fishermen, and instead of being in the broiling sun,

we were kept cool by the current of air so common of Chipola. I have tried many kinds of water for fresh water fishing, and have found none that excelled Chipola river in these points.

After giving away all we could to any neighbor we could see, our fish boxes, made especially to take care of the catch, were too crowded, and we converted one of our boats into a prison for our live fish, by nailing boards across the top and sinking same in the cool shade.

The Little Fisher Maiden. There was nothing which added more genuine pleasure on this trip than the merry presence of the happy girl of eleven. She was the sunshine of the camp; her little voice of song, when rambling among the flowers, seemed recognized and echoed by the song birds of the forest. It seemed as if the squirrels, with their laugh of chatter, came running down the timber to greet her as she passed. You would imagine all nature here sought to make her queen of the forest.

None of the party became tired, for the ladies and the little fisher-maiden, when weary of fishing, amused themselves in various ways, taking the small creek for bathing headquarters. The party was really sad when teams drove up to camp the last day to carry us home. Of course, we took down the remaining fish to bring home for neighbors and friends. We had lots of friends, too, on our return, for friends are always numerous when there's something to be given away to them.

This week's outing, I venture to say is today registered in the memory of each one, as some of the pleasantest days of their lives.

A Later Visit.

Some years afterward I had occasion to be in these parts hunting—I was somewhat out of my way. In order to get located I traveled toward the river which, by chance, brought me suddenly up to the bank at this very spot. There stood the old cedar with its head bowed down as if in grief. Then, too, I noticed some of the stobs which had formed some of the legs of our table. The same old log on which we sat at night by the camp fire. A little further the sandy landing was clean and white; with its sand it was as smooth as if no one had been there since we left. I remembered, too, what a change, for the last time I saw this spot the sand was full of tracks made by the feet of the little fisher-maiden. I remembered how she would rush up the bank to tell mama of her success in the day's fishing; and as I watched the stream gliding slowly downward the waters seemed to mourn to my soul. Going a little further down I recognized the sound of the voice of the same gurgling creek, but its tone was changed, for then the waters seemed to laugh; now it was as though it were shedding tears. The note of the red bird reminded me of the days spent there last, and my heart was thrilled with pain and grief, for all these spoke to me of our little fisher-maiden, who loved them all so well. She could return no more to drink of the brook's cool water, or mingle her song with that of the birds or bless all nature here, for The light of her young life went down As sinks behind the hill, The glory of a setting star, Clear, suddenly and still.

As pure and bright, her fair brow seemed,
Eternal as the sky;
And like the brook's low song, her voice,
A sound which could not die.

There seemed a shadow on the day,
Her smile no longer cheers;
A dimness on the stars at night,
Like eyes that look through tears.

Alone unto our Father's will
One thought hath reconciled,
That He whose love excels ours
Hath taken home His child.

And so it is in this life of ours,
A calm may be on the present gloom,
But the calmest hour of festive glee
May turn the mother of woe to these.

Don't Kick.
Johnny—What did you kick me for?
Father—For heaven's sake don't be a Bryantite.

Should Support the Pearl Eagan Home

BY A. GREENHUT

I wish once again to bring to the notice of our citizens a most worthy institution in our midst, which, in spite of efforts made for it from time to time, is still neglected, and which well deserves all the support we can possibly give it. I refer to the Pearl Eagan Home, which has been doing such noble work for the orphan poor of Pensacola, and the usefulness of which in this respect has been restricted only by the limited support it has heretofore been enabled to obtain. I deem this season of kindness and good will, when men and women are most eager to take up the cause of the needy and the unfortunate, the most opportune time to make an earnest plea in its behalf.

Forty-two years ago I emigrated from my home in Europe to this land of political and religious freedom. While on my way from the interior of Bohemia to the railroad, which was

to carry me to the sea, I was compelled, in those days of poor transportation facilities, to cover the distance in a wagon. In passing a house in this leisurely manner, something caught my eye which I have not forgotten after all those years, and which is suggested to me now. It was a German inscription on a tablet attached to the house, according to an old custom, and this is what it said: "Wir Menschen bauen Hauser fest. Und sind darin nur fremde Gast. Da bauen wir sehr wenig drein." Which may be roughly translated as follows:

"We humans build strong houses. Wherein we are but stranger guests; But where we hope to spend eternity. We do but little building."

It is indeed true that we are more apt to spend time, and means, and energy on ourselves and on our own houses than on the more lasting work of providing comforts for the benefit of others and for the sake of the future. We are so busy laying up treasures on earth that we are a little backward in laying up the other kind of treasures which come from deeds of benevolence and philanthropy. It is at such a time as this, however, the season of the spreading of charity and good will, that we are most ready to labor for others, and therefore I make my plea at this time.

We are making strenuous efforts these days to bring Pensacola into the front rank of progressive cities. Why should we not, all the loyal citizens of Progressive Pensacola, irrespective of creed, unite in making of the Pearl Eagan Orphan Home, by placing it on a permanent basis, which as yet we have failed to do, an institution for any city to be proud of? Let us all, Jew and Gentile alike, work together in harmony for the upbuilding of this worthy home, not only for our own gratification and the good of the present, but also for posterity and the future.



A. GREENHUT.

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Where the Joke Lay.

He was an Englishman, taking a trip on a Welsh excursion steamboat, and he was watching a group of Welsh colliers larking with one another, when they suddenly seized one of their companions and swung him to and fro. The victim shrieked in terror as the ringleader shouted:

"Now, boys, overboard with 'im!" So real was the horror of the collier that the Englishman jumped up and interfered successfully. The collier picked himself up and backed to a safe seat next the Englishman, who sternly reproved him for uttering such nerve shattering cries.

"It was only a joke, and you must have known it," he said.

The collier wiped his forehead. "Iss, I knowed famous it was a joke," he retorted, "an' that's why I did screech blue murrdu. Eu don't know the boys, surr. The joke with them was to chuck me overboard. Thank eu kindly for stoppin' 'em!"—Pearson's Weekly.

Didn't Want to Tell.

The late Professor Greene, author of Greene's Analysis and the English Grammar with which so many have wrestled in their school days, was one of the most genial and fatherly of men. During the later years of his life he was professor of mathematics and astronomy in a New England college. There was in one of his classes a somewhat slow witted though studious young man, whom we will call Jones. On a certain occasion after Jones had repeated carefully the text book statements about the effects of the motions of the earth and was trying to remember what came next in the book the professor interposed with: "Were you ever in the shadow of the earth, Mr. Jones?" Jones (slowly)—No, sir. Professor—Where do you spend your nights, sir? Jones didn't want to tell.—Universalist Leader.

Playing Safe.

"I have known her ever since she was a little girl at school." "How long ago was that?" "Let's see. Was it last Fourth of July or next?"



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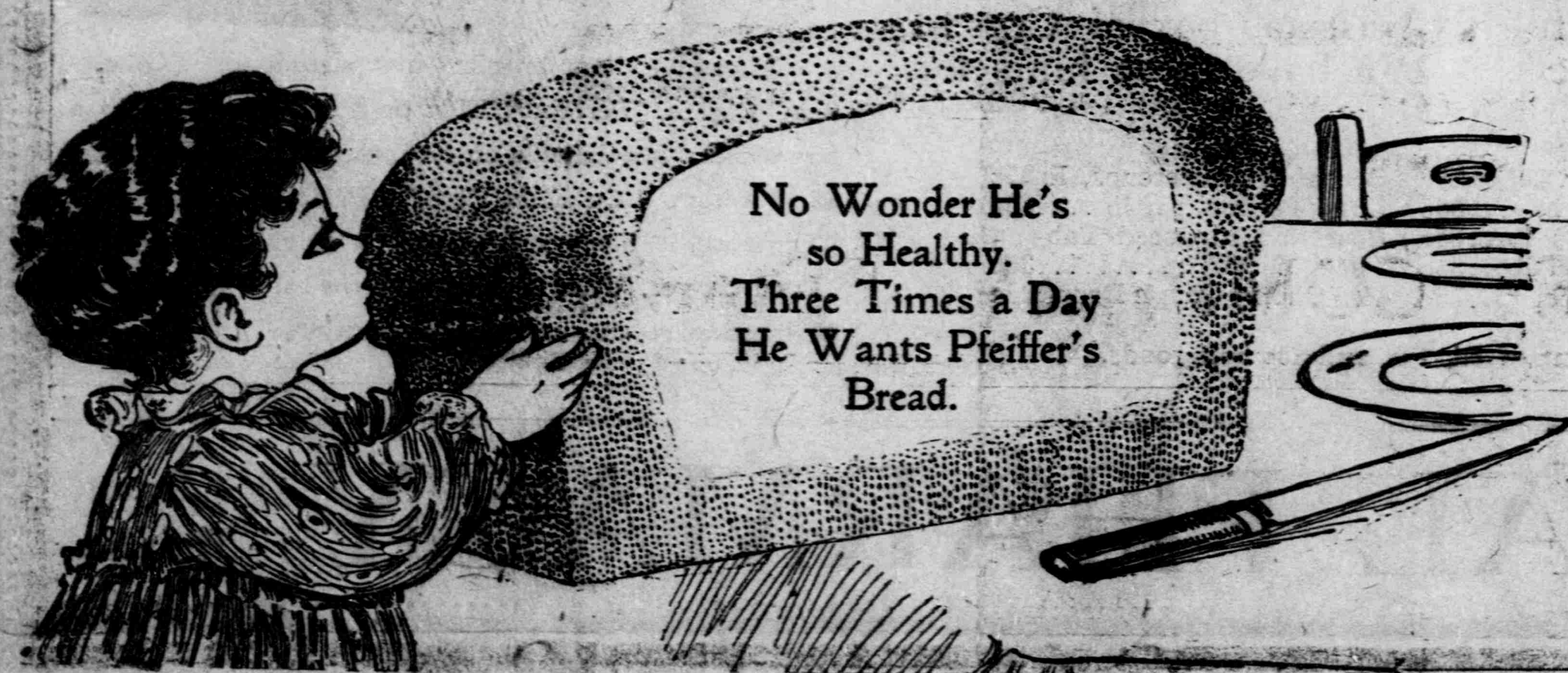
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